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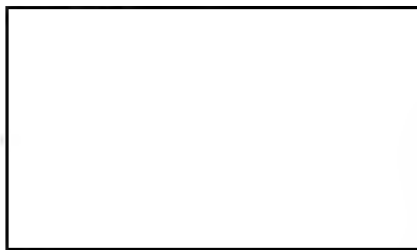
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2. USSR REPORTEDLY GUARANTEES SYRIAN SECURITY

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Khrushchev assured the Syrian government delegation now in Moscow that "Syria's security is guaranteed" and that the USSR "will not allow or tolerate any aggression against Syria," according to an authoritative Syrian leftist newspaper on 5 August. Khrushchev's statement was reportedly made in the presence of Bulganin and Zhukov just before Khrushchev left for Rumania on 1 August.

While such a statement by Khrushchev might have been intended as a general assurance of Soviet support for Syria, it is not a commitment to any specific course of action. Some Syrians reportedly hoped to obtain a pact of mutual support and nonaggression from Moscow.

The reported guarantee would encourage Syrian leftists to believe that they can continue their moves to take over the Syrian government completely with little fear of foreign military intervention.

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3. CUBAN POLITICAL SITUATION DETERIORATES

The political situation in Cuba has become increasingly tense since 1 August when the general strike in Santiago de Cuba and mounting terrorism throughout the island prompted the government to suspend constitutional guarantees. The US ambassador in Havana predicts that serious unrest is certain to occur within the next few days.

The strike has spread to other cities in Oriente Province, the stronghold of rebel leader Fidel Castro and the center of opposition to President Fulgencio Batista. A general strike in Havana has thus far been prevented by government threats against strikers, but workers walked out on the capital's transportation facilities and stopped construction on an American oil refinery on the outskirts of the city. Radio and television workers have also stopped work, in protest against the censorship imposed after the suspension of constitutional guarantees.

Numerous reports of conspiracies within the armed forces and of opposition plans for concerted antigovernment activity in the next few days support the prediction that the Batista regime may be faced with a showdown soon. Opposition leaders are probably aware that if they fail to act in the next few days, Batista will take severe repressive measures, making more difficult any attempt to oust him.